Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 09361 231436Z

50
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 PRS-01 PA-01 USIE-00 EB-07 MC-02

PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 DODE-00 INRE-00 L-03 SAM-01 SAB-01 ACDA-05

EUR-12 SAJ-01 SCCT-01 AID-05 H-02 COME-00 SSO-00 /085 W
---------- 035440
O 231406Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5450

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 9361

FOR NEA/ARN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MASS, LE, US
SUBJECT: PISTOL SALE OF LEBANESE AGENT

REFS: A. STATE 172638; B. BEIRUT 5345; C. STATE 89164

1. FOLLOWING RECEIPT OF REFTEL A, EMBASSY IS SEEKING INFORMATION FROM SOGHANALIAN REGARDING STATUS OF HANDGUN/AMMUNITION ORDER (I.I., QUANITITES RECEIVED) AS WELL AS ANSWERS TO FOLLOWING QUESTIONS A) WHAT QUANTITIES OF WEAPONS FROM THIS ORDER HAVE BEEN SOLD? AND B) NATURE OF SALES AND RECIPIENTS (I.E., LEBANESE MILITARY, INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES, RETAIL, ETC.) WE HOPE TO HAVE RESPONSES FROM SOGHANALIAN SHORTLY AND WILL FORWARD INFORMATION TO DEPT BY NIACT IMMEDIATE CABLE AS SOON AS RECEIVED. EMBOFF ALSO ATTEMPTED MORNING JULY 23 (LOCAL) SEE APPROPRIATE LEBANESE ARMY OFFICIAL RE POSSIBLE SALES TO LEBANESE ARMY, BUT ARMY OFFICIAL CANCELLED APPOINTMENT "BECAUSE OF URGENT BUSINESS." WE WILL FOLLOW UP WITH GOL AUTHORITIES AND REPORT RESULTS JULY 24.

2. IN MEANTIME, WE SUBMIT FOR DEPT'S POSSIBLE USE FOLLOWING INFORMATION REGARDING EMBASSY ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT THIS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 09361 231436Z

TRANSACTION ON LEBANESE INTERNAL SCENE.

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

3. AS EMBASSY NOTED IN REFTEL B, SOGHANALIAN IS TO BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, AUTHORIZED AGENT IN LEBANON FOR COLT INDUSTRIES AND IS INVOLVED IN ALL COLT ARMS SALES TO THE GOVT OF LEBANON (BOTH ARMY AND INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES) AS WELL AS RETAIL SALES TO PRIVATE CITIZENS. IT IS REASONABLE ALSO TO ASSUME, IN VIEW OF HIS STATUS AS COLT AGENT AND PAST ASSOCIATION WITH GOL PROCUREMENT, THAT SOGHANALIAN IS RECOGNIZED AS COLT AGENT BY THE LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AND THAT HE COMPLIED IN THIS COMMERCIAL TRANSACTION, WITH APPLICABLE LEBANESE LAWS AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE IMPORTATION OF FIREARMS.

4. AFTER CAREFULLY REVIEWING EMBASSY POSITION ON THIS CASE (REFTEL B), WE CONCLUDE THAT, IN ABSENCE OF USG DECISION TO PROHIBIT ALL RPT ALL ARMS EXPORTS TO LEBANON, OUR REPLY TO REFTEL C WAS A PROPER JUDGMENT IN THIS CASE. WE CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF THIS SALE, WITHIN CONTEXT OF LEBANESE SITUATION, TO BE MINIMAL RPT MINIMAL. IN SITUATION WHERE COUNTLESS AUTOMATIC AND SEMI-AUTOMATIC WEAPONS (PRIMARILY OF SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN MANUFACTURE) ARE IN PRIVATE HANDS, WE DO NOT RPT NOT CONSIDER IMPORTATION OF 1,400 HANDGUNS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TT LOCAL ARMS RACE. AS WE INDICATED IN REFTEL B, HANDGUNS MAY JUSTIFIABLY BE CONSIDERED AS BASICALLY PERSONAL PROTECTION WEAPON UNDER PREVAILING LOCAL CONDITIONS, AS WELL AS SIDE-ARM FOR LEBANESE MILITARY AND INTERNAL SECURITY PERSONNEL. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING, FROM NUMEROUS CONVERSATIONS AND CONTACTS AS WELL AS EVIDENCE OF OUR OWN OBSERVATIONS, THAT KALASHNIKOVS (AK 47S) OR SIMILAR AUTOMATIC WEAPONS (M16S) ARE MUCH PREFERRED BY EVEN PRIVATE CITIZENS HERE TO HANDGUNS. FURTHERMORE, HANDGUN ADVANTAGE FOR PURPOSES OF CONCEALMENT, ESPECIALLY 45 CAL SIZE, IS HARDLY RELEVANT IN SITUATION WHERE MEN ARMED WITH FULLY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS MAY BE OBSERVED IN STREETS.

5. WE CONTINUE TO REJECT ARGUMENT THAT SALE OF HANDGUNS ON SCALE OF THIS TRANSACTION "MIGHT BE USED TO FUEL DOMESTIC MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN ARMS RACE." WHOEVER BELIEVES THIS DOES NOT RPT NOT KNOW LEBANON. TO EXTENT THAT SUCH ARMS RACE EXISTS, IT IS CONCENTRATED ON ACQUISITION OF AUTOMATIC WEAPONS, LIGHT AND HEAVY MACHINE GUNS, RPG ROCKETS, MORTARS, ETC. RECENT CLASHES IN LEBANON PROVIDED NO RPT NO EVIDENCE THAT CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 09361 231436Z

HANDGUNS PLAYED EVEN INFINITESIMAL PART IN THEIR INSTIGATION OR PROSECUTION. INDEED, PERSON ARMED WITH HANDGUN DURING SUCH TIMES MUST BE CONSIDERED ESSENTIALLY DEFENSELESS. LIKEWISE, WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT NONE OF HANDGUNS INVOLVED WERE DESTINED FOR FEDAYEEN GROUPS, WHO APPARENTLY HAVE MORE THAN ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF ARMS AND AMMUNITION, OF ALL KINDS, FROM OTHER SOURCES. HAD COLT NOT RECEIVED THE ORDER, AN ARMS MANUFACTURER OF ANOTHER NATION WOULD HAVE DONE THE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

BUSINESS.

6. FOLLOWING DRAFTING OF ABOVE, ACTING DATT CONTACTED SOGHANALIAN WHO PROVIDED FOLLOWING INFORMATION: ACCORDING SOGHANALIAN, MAJOR PORTION OF ORDER RECEIVED TO DATE ARE QTE STILL UNDER HIS CONTROL END QTE. HE STATES THAT HE IS SELLING ONLY TO QTE REPUTABLE CITIZENS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO BUY AND CARRY WEAPONS UNDER LEBANESE LAW END QTE.
GODLEY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SMALL ARMS, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 23 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT09361
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750254-0378
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750727/aaaaaxyf.tel
Line Count: 125
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 172638, 75 BEIRUT 5345, 75 STATE 89164
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 AUG 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <02 DEC 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PISTOL SALE OF LEBANESE AGENT
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MASS, LE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006